

FY'24 Breastfeeding Action Plan

Objective:

By September 30, 2024, increase the proportion of Iowa WIC participants who initiate breastfeeding, breastfeed exclusively through six months, and continue to breastfeed until one year of age, by improving breastfeeding support through partnership development and providing extended, consistent education for all WIC staff.

Purpose Statement:

According to the Center for Disease Control 2022 Breastfeeding Report Card, 82.4% of Iowa mothers initiated breastfeeding, 27% continued breastfeeding exclusively until the recommended six months, and 38.2% breastfed until one year of age in 2019. The Healthy People 2030 goals for breastfeeding include increasing the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through six months of age to 42.4% and the proportion that are breastfed at one year to 54.1%. The most recent Iowa WIC Program data through April 2023 show that 69% of Iowa WIC participants initiate breastfeeding, 34% continue to exclusively breastfeed at six months, and 51% continue to breastfeed until one year of age.

Over the past two years, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and the Iowa WIC Program have worked with Coffective, a public health consulting agency specializing in maternal health and breastfeeding support, to create the Iowa Breastfeeding Strategic Plan. The Breastfeeding Strategic Plan was developed with input from a core team of Iowa HHS partners, as well as state partners from over 30 organizations that have an interest in increasing breastfeeding support and promotion. The team worked with Coffective to facilitate a local landscape scan, develop a landscape opportunity analysis, and identify strengths and areas for improvement. From these activities, the strategic plan was created, including four main goals: 1) Building collaborative partnerships to improve maternal child health program coordination; 2) Improving access to adequate and quality lactation services; 3) Increasing community-based support; and 4) Improving awareness, support and access to donor breast milk. Work is underway on each of the goals and the hope is that the activities will help WIC families succeed in meeting their breastfeeding goals.

The Iowa WIC Program strives to help families succeed by providing anticipatory guidance, education, and support by breastfeeding peer counselors and professionals with extended breastfeeding education, such as nurses, dietitians, or lactation consultants. The Iowa WIC Program offers several extended lactation trainings available as a part of the Midwest Region OA Grant to WIC staff at local agencies each year. The goal of offering these trainings is to expand staff knowledge and ability to provide extended, tailored, and equitable lactation support to all families.

Action Plan:

- By December 31, 2023, the Iowa Breastfeeding Database will be widely publicized and include all organizations and individuals serving prenatal women and breastfeeding dyads. WIC participants will be able to use the database to get assistance with breastfeeding in their communities.
- By September 30, 2024, five WIC agencies will receive support to initiate new or accelerate existing projects that increase collaboration and access to breastfeeding support and improve outcomes.
- By September 30, 2024, all WIC staff will have been offered the opportunity to and interested staff will have participated in extended lactation trainings through the Midwest Region OA Grant to expand knowledge and ability to provide extended, tailored, and equitable lactation support to all families.